

# Maryknoll Hostel, NSW – Drama Therapy Program

Maryknoll Hostel, a Catholic Care of the Aged Hostel in Port Macquarie has achieved three Better Practice Awards in pastoral care, drama group therapy and multi-sensory therapy programs.

Drama therapy is an active, experimental approach that facilitates the residents' ability to tell his/her story, solve problems, set goals, express feelings appropriately, extend the depth and breadth of inner experience, improve interpersonal skills and relationships, and strengthen the ability to perform personal life roles while increasing flexibility between roles.

Drama therapy was first offered to residents at Maryknoll Hostel in 2003. After discussion with interested residents and support from management the "Maryknoll Players Group" was formed.

Three plays have now been performed by Maryknoll's residents.

A new play is presented twice per year. The Recreational Activity Officer has written two of the plays and adapted one to suite the resident's frailty. The plays are 15 minutes long. There are between eight and 12 residents in each production. They practise once a week for 10-12 weeks before the play is presented to an audience. The residents were all involved in the making of costumes. All plays have been very successful, giving much joy to audience and the cast and boosting residents' self esteem.

The group has received media coverage, via local press and QPS Benchmarking has done a feature article in their newsletter.

Maryknoll residents have been asked to perform plays at different locations such as:

- ★ Diversional therapy national conference (more than 100 delegates)
- ★ Cultural day. A story teller presented stories, poetry was read and Maryknoll residents presented a play to approximately 80 residents, staff and families
- ★ Aged care facility in Laurieton - approximately 80 residents attended Maryknoll Christmas party - 120 residents, family, friends, volunteers and staff
- ★ Port Macquarie Golf Club - play re-enacted for Laurieton Day Care Centre for approximately 100 people.

Residents have also had requests and have presented at other aged care facilities within the district.

The final production is great but the residents say they get most enjoyment out of the practice sessions - "lots of interaction and giggles."